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Remembering One Who Touched Lives

Trooper Paul Butterfield's service sets a lasting memory and legacy, and will not be forgotten.

by Rep. Ray Franz
Community contributor

There are times and events that touch the hearts, mind and soul of a community — we always hope they are for happy occasions or accomplishments, but sometimes they are sad. The latter is the case for the tragic death of Trooper Paul K. Butterfield.

Trooper Butterfield was one of those familiar, pleasant faces that regularly reassured our community that we were safe and protected. His calm demeanor and always friendly smile were what people counted on and felt very comfortable with. I know he made me feel that way.

As a firefighter and medical first responder, I had the opportunity to work with Trooper Butterfield while he was stationed in Manistee County so we often crossed paths at accident scenes and on medical emergencies. He, like all of his fellow troopers, was always calm, under control, cooperative and helpful. He made sure we had the space to do our job while he went about his. We also always knew that he had our backs. That's what professionals do. They make their exacting work look simple, easy and routine.

When we met away from emergency calls, Paul was always quick with that beaming smile and made me and others feel like we were the best of friends. I think that is a carryover of his love of animals. A good heart is simply a good heart. I vividly remember the last time I saw Paul. It was just a week or two before his murder that I ran into him at the "Blessing of the Badges" at Ludington's



Fallen Michigan State Trooper Paul Butterfield.
Photo courtesy of the office of Rep. Ray Franz

Friday Night Live. Jennifer, my chief of staff, and I saw him in his vehicle. As we approached, he jumped out of his car and greeted us as long lost friends. I remember how his face glowed with his large smile, and his handshake was firm and sincere. We chatted about his assignment to the Hart Post and reminisced about his years in Manistee. Our visit ended too soon as we prepared for the Blessing of the Badges ceremony. That Trooper Butterfield was a part of that, a greater power surely had a plan.

Despite the loss of Trooper Butterfield, he shall not go without leaving a lasting legacy. First and foremost are all the lives he touched in some way by serving our communities, being it answering a call for help, protecting our safety on the roads and right up to his smiling hello for a good day wish. The second part of recognizing Trooper Butterfield's sacrifice is work I've begun on several fronts to ensure that his loss will save others, such as options to provide more and better protection shields for law enforcement officers and developing new legislation to help protect them during routine traffic stops.

Lastly, I have introduced legisla-



An officer kneels before the casket of Trooper Paul Butterfield.
Photo courtesy of the office of Rep. Ray Franz



State Rep. Ray Franz.
Photo courtesy of the office of Rep. Ray Franz

tion to dedicate a section of the M-116 highway — from the Lincoln River to the Sauble River at the Ludington State Park — in Trooper Butterfield's name, so that we never forget. Trooper Paul Butterfield was a man who touched our lives in so many ways; who touched our community and who made our world a better place. Not with splashy things — but by going about his normal life in an extraordinary way. He and his service to our communities will be missed by family, friends and residents.